

## SENIOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

# Monthly Newsletter

*we're so glad you're here!*

## September is Suicide Prevention Month

As we step into September, recognized nationwide as Suicide Prevention Month, it's crucial to shed light on a pressing issue that often goes unnoticed—the impact of suicide among older adults, particularly those 55 years and older. At our Senior Behavioral Health Program, our mission is to support and provide care to seniors facing various mental health challenges. This month, we emphasize the importance of awareness, prevention, and seeking help.

## The Reality of Suicide in Older Adults

While suicide is a serious concern across all age groups, it disproportionately affects older adults. In fact, individuals aged 55 and older have one of the highest suicide rates of any demographic. There are numerous factors contributing to this, including feelings of loneliness, chronic pain, financial stress, loss of loved ones, and the struggle with age-related changes. Mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and substance abuse are often underlying issues that exacerbate these feelings, leading to a heightened risk of suicide.

## Recognizing the Signs

Understanding the warning signs of suicide is the first step in prevention. For older adults, these signs may be subtle and can often be mistaken for normal aging processes. However, it's important to be vigilant. Some key signs to look out for include:

- Talking about wanting to die or to harm oneself
- Expressing feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness, or being a burden to others
- Withdrawal from social activities, friends, and family
- Changes in sleep patterns, such as insomnia or oversleeping
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Sudden changes in mood, particularly from despair to calmness
- Neglect of personal care or hygiene
- Giving away personal belongings or saying goodbye to loved ones



If you notice any of these signs in yourself or someone else, it's vital to take them seriously and seek help immediately.

## Ways to Get Help

Our program dedicated to providing comprehensive care to those in need. Our program is specifically designed for individuals aged 55 and older who are struggling with mental health disorders. We offer a safe and supportive environment where seniors can receive the care they need to regain hope and stability.

- Contact our Senior Behavioral Health Program at (620.724.7399)
- Reach out to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255) or text HOME to 741741.
- Speak with your healthcare provider about your concerns.
- Engage with family, friends, or community groups to stay connected.



## A minute with Mike

MIKE WILLIS, OUTREACH COORDINATOR, THERAPIST

At Girard Medical Center, we understand that aging can bring about significant challenges, but your patients or loved ones don't have to face them alone. Our team is here to help them navigate these difficulties with compassion and expertise. This Suicide Prevention Month, let's work together to break the silence, spread awareness, and offer hope to those in need.

Remember, it's never too late to seek help and find support. For more resources click [here](#).